

VZCZCXRO4167  
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHGB #1159 0941125  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 041125Z APR 07  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0540  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE  
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFSS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 001159

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/03/2017

TAGS: PGOV PHUM PREL MOPS I2

SUBJECT: USCENTCOM COMMANDER TELLS MOI THAT SECURITY MUST IMPROVE RAPIDLY

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Daniel Speckhard for 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In his first meeting with Minister of Interior Jawad al-Bolani, Admiral William J. Fallon, the Commander of USCENTCOM, stressed that Iraq's security must improve rapidly for continued U.S. political support. Minister Bolani responded that the initial results of Operation Fardh al-Qanoon (the Baghdad Security Plan) were promising and that he was confident of success. Bolani provided an upbeat assessment of other reforms and claimed he had successfully "cleansed" the Ministry of Interior of corruption. He said one of his biggest challenges is to hire qualified, non-sectarian leaders for the ministry. END SUMMARY.

-----  
Iraqi Security Improving  
-----

¶2. (C) At a March 25 meeting with Minister of Interior Jawad al-Bolani, new CENTCOM Commander Admiral William J. Fallon stressed that security in Iraq must improve quickly if Iraq wants U.S. domestic political support to be maintained. Bolani agreed, stating that the early results of Fardh al-Qanoon (the revised Baghdad Security Plan) were promising.

He highlighted a sharp reduction in sectarian murders in Baghdad, asserting they had fallen by seventy percent since the operation's start. He acknowledged, however, that more work remains to be done, especially in reducing the level of car bombings.

-----  
Police Bravery and Improvement  
-----

¶3. (C) Bolani emphasized the sacrifices of MOI policemen, citing the deaths of over twelve thousand officers since the removal of Saddam from power. He added that the police were continually improving their skills in preventing and responding to vehicle and roadside bomb attacks. He noted the quick police action in identifying and attacking a March 24 suicide truck bomber as an example of how police are reducing the effect of mass casualty attacks by stopping suicide bombers before they reach their targets.

-----  
Ministry of Interior "Cleansed"  
-----

¶4. (C) Bolani was upbeat in his assessment of the progress being made against MOI corruption, asserting that he had successfully "cleansed" the ministry. He said he had established a climate where Iraqi police know that they are

not "above the law" and that they exist to serve all Iraqis. He said that the MOI would now be able to develop "synchronously" with the rule of law. Besides ending corruption, Bolani said his other main management challenge was to improve the level of professionalism within the National Police. He praised the efforts of Multinational Security Transition Command - Iraq (MNSTC-I) in developing a "solid foundation" for a high quality, professional security force for Iraq.

-----  
Working with Sunni Sheiks  
-----

¶5. (C) Bolani said that despite the violence, Iraq is still much better than during Saddam's regime because the people now have hope in the future. He added that the Iraqi people know that freedom requires patience and sacrifice and they are dealing with the current challenges with strength. Bolani emphasized that most of Iraq is relatively calm and that even the situation in al-Anbar province is improving. He added that the MOI is reaching out to Iraq's Sunni population, highlighting recent efforts to recruit police from Sunni provinces. This has resulted in almost eight thousand new Sunni recruits. Bolani said that he had just met with a group of Sunni tribal sheiks from the western Baghdad suburb of Radwaniyah who had asked for help in dealing with AQI in its area. Bolani praised the sheiks' "courageous initiative" and said it was indicative of the improving relationship between the MOI and the Sunni population. Bolani said such efforts were critical to defeating the insurgency and terrorists.

¶6. (U) This cable was cleared by Admiral Fallon.  
CROCKER